

Callicera spinolae Rondani — Extended Range

By C. O. HAMMOND, F.R.E.S.

Of the 3 species of Hoverfly in the Genus *Callicera* recorded for Britain, *C. spinolae* is undoubtedly the loveliest and well worthy of the name Golden Hoverer-fly given to it by C. Morley when he recorded his first specimen for Suffolk at Brandiston Marshes in September 1942 and again at Monks Soham in October 1947. Previous to this the only specimen recorded for Britain was also taken in Suffolk at Southwold by J. W. Bowhill on 1st October 1928.

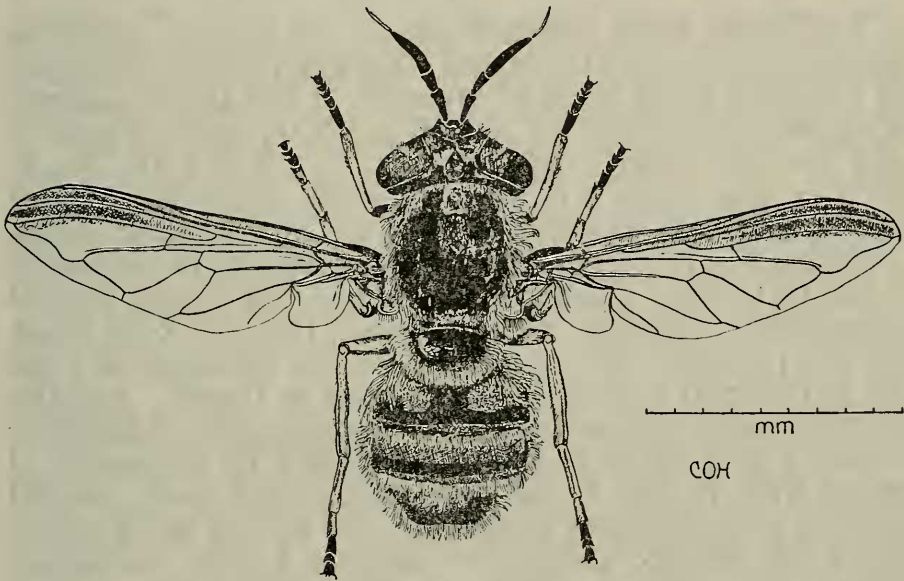
On 19th September 1972 I was standing in the woodland garden at Houghton Hall near East Rudham in West Norfolk observing various Diptera and Homoptera when I saw what appeared to be a bee of the *Andrena* species flying near the ground in erratic flight common to the Hymenoptera; but when the insect made closer approach the brilliant bands of golden hairs on the abdomen and the brassy green-black of the rest of the body confirmed it must be a hover-fly and one new to me. Having no net I made a desperate grab at it and caught it in my hand! Though I kept the specimen, a female, alive in a large jar it died a few days later without depositing eggs. This is the first record for Norfolk.

While attending the A.E.S. Exhibition at Holland Park School on 30th September 1972, I showed my specimen to Mr I. Perry who informed me that he had taken a female at Lode, near Cambridge on 19th September 1971, the first record for Cambridgeshire. Subsequent correspondence from Mr Perry stated that the identification of his specimen had been confirmed by Dr J. Smart of the Department of Zoology, Cambridge University. The specimen had a wing span of 28 mm.; mine was 32 mm. Males have not yet been taken in Britain; this may well be because they prefer to stay by the breeding sites waiting for the females to emerge, a habit I have frequently noticed with *Calli-probola speciosa*, Rossi, another lovely Syrphid. However, some females must wander in search for new breeding sites and visit flowers for feeding, angelica and ivy-blossom being favoured. Like most very rare Syrphids the flight period seems limited to 3 weeks or less. Whereas *C. spinolae* occurs from mid-September to early October. *C. rufa* occurs mainly in August; while *C. aenea*, the commonest and most widely distributed species, has been taken from mid-June to mid-August.

A very detailed account of the breeding habits of *C. rufa*, the brassy-black species with rufous or black hairs, has been given by R. L. Coe who found the larvae in a decayed cavity partly filled with resinous water in an ancient Scots Pine near Braemar, Aberdeenshire. Some larvae, subsequently bred by him, took as long as five years to pupate. The early stages of *C. spinolae* and *C. aenea* are apparently unknown, though it is most likely that they too breed in rotten wood.

C. aenea, metallic green with no conspicuous bands on the abdomen, was recorded from Windsor Forest, a female, by A. M. Low, 23.vi.57 on rhododendron; from Bromley, Kent, a female on goutweed, August 1959 by P. J. Chandler and the most recent record is of a male taken flying over a narrow drainage ditch with slow, almost hovering flight at a marsh near Sourton, North Devon on 16.vii.72 by Mr G. M. Spooner.

It was thought worth while to illustrate the specimen taken in Norfolk this year so that collectors, other than Dipterists, might be conversant with the general appearance. Outstanding points in identification are the very long black antennae with a white arista, the copious golden hairs along the sides of the thorax and abdomen, the two wide bands of golden hairs on the



abdomen, the saffron colour of the anterior portion of the forewings with a darkened tip, and the brassy green-black body. In the illustration the golden hairs have of necessity been indicated in black but the general make-up is remarkably like that of *Calliprobola speciosa* Rossi, shown as a colour plate in *Flies of the British Isles*, but *C. speciosa* has 3 bands of golden hairs on the abdomen in place of the 2 in *Callicera spinolae*.

34 Passmore Gardens, New Southgate, N.11.

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The Middle Atlas: A Further Visit, May-June 1972

By C. G. M. DE WORMS, M.A., Ph.D., F.R.E.S.

The region which embraces Azrou and Ifran is indeed the most attractive part of the Middle Atlas and probably the richest for butterflies in the whole of Morocco. I had already sampled its species on two occasions in April and May, 1965 and again in May and June, 1969 (vide *Ent. Rec.*, 77: 177 and 81: 286) so that I considered yet a further visit would be profitable rather later in the season to obtain some of the early summer species. I therefore flew to Gibraltar on 28th May, arriving in the evening to find that the car I had arranged to be at the airport was not forthcoming. However, after negotiation from the Rock Hotel, one was produced after 10 p.m., which was fortunate, as I was able to transport it the following morning to Tangier. Had this not been possible, I should have had to wait three days in Gibraltar as the car ferry was to be laid up in dry dock for this period. I set out from Tangier by the coastal route via Larache where I halted in some promising ground and saw the first spring butterflies which included *Gonepteryx cleopatra* L. and *Anthocharis eupheno* L. as well as *Euchloé ausonia* Hübn., *Colias croceus* Fourc. and *Aricia cramera* Eschesch. I travelled on via Meknes, completing the 250 miles to Ifran by dusk. There I joined Major-General Sir George and Lady Ida Johnson at the large and rather old fashioned Grand Hotel where they had already been for a week and had been able to form a good idea of the season and the prevalence of the various species. It soon became evident on the following day, the 30th, that not only was it a very late year, but not nearly such a prolific one as I had experienced in the same area in 1969 at this time of the year. Most of the early May insects were still well on the wing at this altitude of nearly 6,000 ft. The chief species flying in the immediate vicinity of Ifran were *Zegris eupheme meridionalis* Lederer, *Gonepteryx rhamni* L., *Euphydrias desfontainii* Godart, *Melitaea aetherie* Hübn., *M. didyma* Esp., *Callophrys rubi* L., and *Plebicula thersites*. Cantener with its very bright females; while that beautiful little Blue, *Philotes bavius fatma* Oberthur was exceptionally numerous together with a few of its smaller relative *P. aben-*